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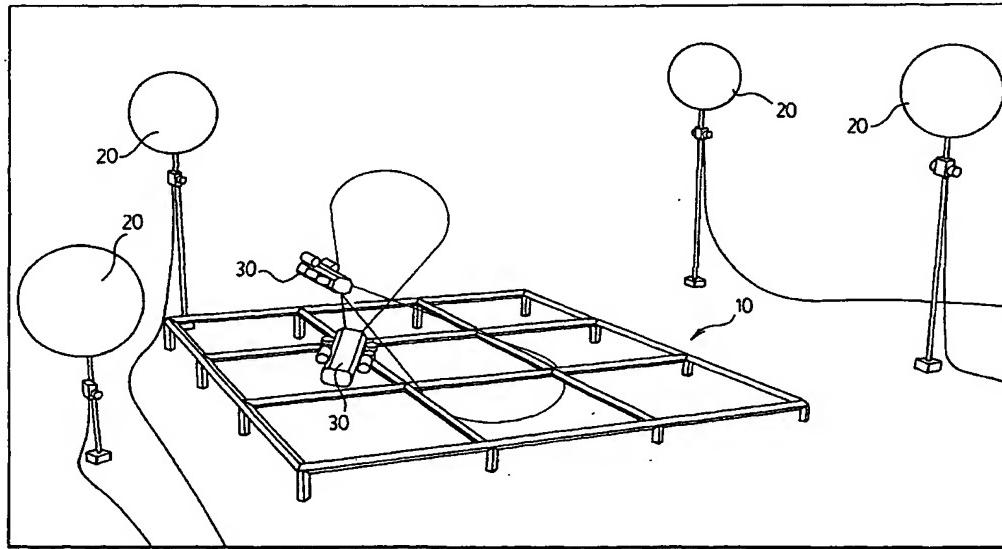
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(54) Title: UNDERWATER OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: An underwater optical communications system and method particularly suitable for use in communications with automated equipment. A series of light beacons are dispersed throughout a communications zone. The light beacons are each provided with a plurality of light-emitting elements and light receiving elements which are positioned so that each beacon within the communications zone emits light in a plurality of directions and receives light from a plurality of directions. A submersible craft is similarly provided with light emitting elements and light receiving elements. The submersible craft is thus always in optical communication with one or more beacons when in the communications zone, regardless of the orientation of the craft and regardless of the position of the craft within the communications zone.

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